

REMARKS

The Office Action indicated that Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9, 10, 13-15 and 21 are allowable. Claims 17 and 18 are canceled without prejudice, solely to expedite prosecution of the present application. Claim 19 is amended by incorporating the limitation of Claim 17, now canceled. No new matter has been added herewith.

Obviousness

Claims 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0021823 A1 to Nemoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,714,232 to Reilly et al. Applicant has canceled Claims 17 and 18, rendering the rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request removal of the rejection.

Objection

Claims 19 and 20 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 19 is amended to be in independent form, incorporating all of the limitations of Claim 17, now canceled. Claim 20 is dependent on Claim 19. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that Claims 19 and 20 be allowed.

No Disclaimers or Disavowals

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, Applicant is not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that Applicant has made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

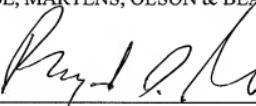
CONCLUSION

In view of Applicants' amendments to the Claims and the foregoing Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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